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The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 60/32 A and B of 30 November 2005 and Security Council resolution 1589 (2005) of 24 March 2005, by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) until 24 March 2006. The present report reviews the activities of UNAMA since my previous report, dated 12 August 2005 (A/60/224-S/2005/525). It also includes proposals for the adjustment of the Mission's mandate. During the reporting period, the Security Council received oral briefings on 23 August 2005 (see S/PV.5249 and Corr.1), 23 November 2005 (see S/PV.5309), 17 January 2006 (see S/PV.5347) and 10 February 2006 (see S/PV.5369).

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II. Completion of the Bonn Agreement

2. Over the past six months, the political transition provided for under the Bonn Agreement was completed with the elections for and inauguration of the country's new National Assembly. In a little over four years, Afghanistan has made significant progress towards becoming a democratic State with accountable institutions. Further progress has been made towards the rehabilitation of the basic infrastructure that can support economic and social development. Nevertheless, as noted in my previous report, many issues that present challenges to the short and longer-term security and stability of the new democratic State have not yet been resolved. These range from the strengthening of nascent Government structures to upholding human rights, enforcing the fundamentals of good governance, justice and the rule of law, disbanding illegal armed groups and laying the foundation for sustainable economic and social development. In recognition of the daunting challenges ahead, and to ensure that the underpinnings of a viable democratic State are firmly in place, the Government of Afghanistan and the international community reaffirmed their commitment to the long-term future of the country by launching the Afghanistan Compact at the London Conference on 31 January 2006 (see S/2006/90, annex).

A. Political process

3. On 18 September 2005, some 6.4 million Afghans, representing a little over 50 per cent of registered voters, went to the polling centres to elect representatives to the Lower House of the National Assembly and the 34 provincial councils. Despite fears that violence would disrupt the process, especially given the trend of attacks in the preceding months, which included the murder of eight candidates, the security incidents that took place on election day did not significantly affect the polling. However, the counting and complaints process that followed took place in a climate of tension and distrust. This was in part due to the complexities of the process, and especially to the large number of candidates who required voluminous and sometimes confusing ballots. More significantly, the tension was fuelled by thousands of defeated candidates, many of whom were reluctant to acknowledge their electoral defeat. Significant protests and demonstrations took place in Kunduz, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Kabul, which resulted in some disruption to the count process. In all, some 5,400 complaints were lodged with the Electoral Complaints Commission, of which some 3,300 were adjudicated, including 575 high-priority cases, most of them alleging fraud. The Commission imposed fines in 22 cases and banned nine officials from serving in future electoral administrations, among other sanctions. In addition, the Joint Electoral Management Body excluded 703 of the polling stations and 74 ballot boxes (equivalent to some 2.5 per cent of the total stations) from the count because of clear indications of fraud — mostly ballot stuffing.

4. Throughout the electoral process, a total of 54 candidates were excluded by the Electoral Complaints Commission: 34 for linkages to armed groups, 12 for failing to resign from public office, 5 for submitting an insufficient number of valid signatures to support their candidature and 3 for fraud or intimidation.

5. With the completion of the Electoral Complaints Commission investigations and the implementation of measures to correct irregularities, the Joint Electoral Management Body received notification from the Commission that no remaining

complaints could materially alter the outcome, and announced the final certified results on 12 November.

6. The new Lower House reflects Afghanistan's political and ethnic diversity, including a large number of professionals, a contingent of liberals, many of whom were prominent in the Communist Government of the 1980s, some former commanders, jihadis, a small number of reconciled Taliban, and some individuals accused of serious human rights abuses. In an encouraging development, of the 68 women elected to the Lower House (27 per cent of all seats), several received sufficient votes to secure their seats without recourse to quotas for women. For the 420 available seats on the provincial councils, 121 women were elected. Five provincial seats reserved for women remain vacant, however, owing to the lack of women candidates in three provinces.

7. In November, each provincial council elected from among its members 2 representatives to serve in the Upper House; of the 64 elected officials, 6 are women. The full complement of the National Assembly was reached on 9 December, with the certification by the Joint Electoral Management Body of the 34 members (including 17 women) nominated by President Hamid Karzai. The electoral process was concluded on 19 December, with the inauguration of the National Assembly.

Government activities

8. In the first months of the National Assembly's proceedings, debates focused primarily on administrative matters and on issues of public concern (such as the publication in Europe of caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad; whether female parliamentarians should be accompanied by male relatives when they travel; and threats to the country's security). The members of the Wolesi Jirga (Lower House) elected Yunus Qanooni, a former presidential candidate, as its chair, and the Mesharano Jirga (Upper House) elected the former President of Afghanistan, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, as its chair. Both houses also elected their administrative boards, formed 18 house committees to review the some 200 laws and Presidential decrees issued over the last three years, and held debates on the implementation of the National Assembly's rules and procedures on the vote of confidence on cabinet appointments. In this regard, the Lower House took a decision on 27 February to exercise its constitutional authority to review and approve the Cabinet on an individual rather than a collective basis.

9. The National Assembly also devoted four days of debate to the emerging threats to the country's stability. Security was also the focus of President Karzai's dialogue with Pakistani authorities during his official visit to Islamabad from 15 to 17 February 2006. In the debates in the National Assembly, a number of women representatives and lesser-known personalities played a prominent role.

10. Despite the National Assembly's deliberations on matters of public concern, there are signs that the population is becoming impatient at the lack of meaningful progress on these issues. A number of civil society groups have come together to form the Coordination Office for Civil Organizations to lobby the Assembly on human rights and reform, and in particular the importance of freedom of expression, equality of men and women and judicial reforms, including the membership of the Supreme Court.

B. Security sector institutions

1. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and disbandment of illegal armed groups

11. As mentioned in my previous report (S/2005/525, para. 26), the disarmament and demobilization portion of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme has ended, while reintegration efforts continue. As at 22 February 2006, 60,646 of the 62,044 demobilized members of the Afghan Military Forces had completed the process. The Disarmament and Reintegration Commission, headed by the Deputy Minister for Defence, is now finalizing preparations for the formal launch of the programme for the disbandment of illegal armed groups, which targets armed groups that are not formally related to the structure of the Afghan security agencies.

12. The disbandment of illegal armed groups was first piloted during the run-up to the parliamentary and provincial council elections in 2005 as a means of implementing the electoral criteria that precluded individuals with links to illegal armed groups from standing as candidates. Consequently, 34 candidates were disqualified from participating in the elections and 4,857 weapons were handed over by 124 candidates. In September, the Joint Secretariat of the Disarmament and Reintegration Commission, comprising all relevant national and international security agencies, compiled a list of about 450 Government officials suspected of having links to illegal armed groups. From that list, 13 officials (all below the level of governor) were confirmed to have links to illegal armed groups and were given a 30-day period to disarm voluntarily. Of the 13, 8 handed over a total of 1,080 weapons, 1 died, and 4 were removed from their posts for failure to comply. The Joint Secretariat is working to confirm information on the remaining 437 officials and is considering possible additions. As at 15 February 2006, a total of 17,655 weapons had been handed over by groups or individuals with links to illegal armed groups.

13. On 26 January 2006, the Government of Afghanistan and its international partners agreed on a national disbandment of illegal armed groups strategy which provides for close coordination with initiatives aimed at extending the rule of law, good governance, security and development assistance. The programme will not offer incentives to illegal armed groups; instead it will offer time-bound opportunities for voluntary and negotiated compliance, failing which the Ministry of Interior can enforce compliance using State security resources. The programme will give priority to districts with a high incidence of disputes attributed to illegal activity, including taxation and land occupation, where insecurity caused by illegal armed groups is hampering development activities, and where their presence prevents the authorities from implementing rule of law programmes and counter-narcotic operations.

2. Afghan National Army

14. The current strength of the Afghan National Army is 26,900 troops, with a deployable force of 38 operational *kandaks* (battalions) with 5 regional commands (Kabul, Gardez, Kandahar, Herat and Mazari Sharif). Achieving the goal of a fully operational force of up to 70,000 troops (all ranks) by 2010 presents a number of challenges, including the need to develop specialized support corps (in areas such as

logistics and supply) and senior officers, attrition, and the need for fiscal sustainability. The training efforts have been modified from the accelerated programme of 2005, which provided for 43,000 troops by September 2007 and helped field additional troops during the elections, to a slower-paced programme that provides for enhanced training of troops. At present one *kandak* is undergoing this training.

15. The Afghan National Army has been well received by local communities, and was especially commended by authorities for its performance during the 2005 elections. It has however, increasingly become a focus of attacks by anti-Government elements. The Afghan National Army will continue to participate in joint combat operations with Coalition Forces.

3. Police reform

16. Training of the Afghan National Police continued during the reporting period, and progress was made towards the reform of the Ministry of Interior. In December 2005, as part of the restructuring of police leadership, and following an extensive selection process, 31 generals (12 Pashtun, 16 Tajik, 2 Hazaras and 1 Uzbek) were identified and have taken up the most senior police positions in the Ministry of Interior. The selection process included vetting to exclude human rights violators, based on advice provided by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and UNAMA. The 31 generals are to play a lead role in the selection of officers to fill the next levels of senior positions in the Ministry of Interior.

17. At present, the Afghan National Police comprise 54,000 officers, including border police, who have undergone donor-led training programmes. Training lasts 16 weeks for non-commissioned officers and up to three years for high-ranking officers. Rank and file officers receive training of up to 11 weeks depending on the recruit's literacy level. At all but the most senior levels, illiteracy remains a problem — an estimated 70 per cent of the Afghan National Police force is illiterate.

18. The Afghan National Police has limited ability to project itself outside Kabul. Once deployed to the regions, police officers lack sufficient leadership, equipment and facilities to perform their role. They lack premises, vehicles and communications equipment and salary structures. This situation is compounded by the absence of a functioning judicial and penal system. Furthermore, there is no comprehensive strategy to provide officers with on-the-job training. In some cases, provincial reconstruction teams provide officers with mentoring, logistical assistance and equipment, but this approach is not uniform.

19. Financing of the Afghan National Police will for the immediate to mid-term remain dependent on international donor support. In the framework of the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, pay reform proposals have been developed aimed at achieving parity with the Afghan National Army. The Trust Fund, however, faces an imminent deficit in its ability to disburse police salaries. Immediate funding of $72.2 million for the coming Afghan fiscal year is required. The goal of achieving a fully constituted, professional, functional and ethnically balanced Afghan National Police (including Border Police) to reach its full strength of 62,000 by the end of 2005 has subsequently been revised to the end of 2010.

4. Counter-narcotics activities

20. The illicit narcotics industry poses a profound threat to achieving peace and stability in Afghanistan. Afghanistan remains the largest supplier of opium to the world, accounting for 87 per cent of the global supply with an estimated export value of US$ 2.7 billion in 2005. This thriving economy, equivalent to more than 50 per cent of the country's legal gross domestic revenues, has provided fertile ground for criminal networks, illegal armed groups and extremist elements.

21. Government-led eradication and interdiction efforts have yielded modest results in some areas; however, this has been offset by high crop yields. Poppy cultivation has spread throughout the country. Following a large-scale Government-led anti-cultivation campaign (the threat of law enforcement and promises of alternative livelihoods) in 2005, land under poppy cultivation is estimated to have dropped by 21 per cent. Nevertheless, the average yield of the poppy crop increased to an estimated 39 kilograms per hectare in 2005 compared with 32 kilograms per hectare in 2004. Eradication efforts led by provincial governors in 2005 did not achieve the expected success; only a total of some 4,000 hectares (or 4 per cent of the total poppy fields under cultivation) was eradicated. In 2006, governors have so far reported eradication of nearly 3,000 hectares, although this remains to be verified. Furthermore, the eradication is taking place at an early stage of poppy growth, which could allow for replanting.

22. Poppy cultivation remains an attractive option for farmers, who earn 10 times more per hectare for poppy than for cereals. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in its rapid assessment survey for February 2006 forecast that the number of hectares under poppy cultivation would increase in at least 13 provinces. Reports were also received of farmers being approached to cultivate poppy by groups offering protection or using threats of violence, including in Hilmand, Uruzgan, Zabul and other provinces. Furthermore, in December 2005 a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime survey indicated that some 920,000 Afghans (3.8 per cent of the population) were drug users.

23. In recognition of the urgent need to stem the cycle of insecurity promoted by the narcotics industry, the Government adopted a new Counter-Narcotics Law on 17 December 2005. The law contains criminal and procedural provisions, for, among others, investigation, prosecution and trial and also established the jurisdiction of the Central Narcotics Tribunal. In January, at the London Conference on Afghanistan, the Ministry of Counter-Narcotics launched its revised national drug control strategy, which gives priority to: (a) the fight against drug trafficking; (b) assistance to farmers through alternative livelihoods; (c) drug demand reduction; and (d) institution-building at the central and provincial levels. In this context, eradication efforts are prioritized according to areas where there is access to alternative livelihoods.

5. Justice sector reform

24. The justice system continues to suffer from a lack of sufficiently qualified judges, prosecutors and lawyers, and the necessary physical infrastructure to administer justice fairly and effectively. Institutionalized corruption, political interference, lengthy pretrial detentions, the lack of availability of legal representation and other due process violations remain the norm and contribute to the low level of public trust and confidence in the justice system.

25. A strategic framework for justice sector reform was endorsed by the Cabinet in October 2005. Entitled "Justice for All", the plan was developed through the Consultative Group on Justice chaired by the Ministry of Justice with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNAMA and other key stakeholders. Prior to its approval, "Justice for All" underwent a wide consultation process culminating in a three-day national conference held in Kabul in August 2005. The framework is divided into five areas of activity: law reform, institution-building, access to justice programmes, traditional justice and coordination. UNAMA and UNDP have helped establish a series of working groups with representation from relevant ministries and international stakeholders to implement the framework's priorities.

26. The Supreme Court has now assumed a lead role in relation to the training of judges. The first one-year induction course for new judges started on 24 September 2005 with 170 graduates (118 from the Sharia Faculty of the University of Kabul, 29 from the Madrasans and 23 from the Law and Political Science Faculty of the University of Kabul), only 12 of whom are women. With approximately 1,500 judges and 2,000 prosecutors in the judicial system, demand for training far outstrips supply. In addition, the Supreme Court still needs to fill 308 vacant judicial posts at the district and provincial levels.

27. The human rights situation regarding imprisonment in Afghanistan remains critical. Most prisons are old, dilapidated and overcrowded while others have been destroyed by war and years of neglect. Despite the threat to community security posed by a weak prison infrastructure, reform of the prison system has not yet attracted sufficient funding. Reforms require not only functioning prisons in general, but the establishment of separate facilities for women and juvenile offenders in each of the 34 provinces. Strategies for reconstruction and reform efforts are being developed by a high-level working group under the direct leadership of the Ministry of Justice. A number of specific rehabilitation activities have also been undertaken in the past year, including the reconstruction of the main detention facility in Kabul and major renovations to the central Pol-e-Charkhi Prison. However, the aftermath of the riot at Pol-e-Charkhi Prison, which commenced on 26 February 2006, will necessitate an urgent reassessment of reform approaches and priorities.

C. Human rights

28. The human rights situation in Afghanistan remains challenging, above all owing to the security situation and weaknesses in governance. Impunity of factional commanders and former warlords has also served to undermine incremental improvements. The significant upsurge in violence in some parts of the country has limited the access to those areas by both international humanitarian actors and Government representatives, denying the population access to entitlements, services and protection.

29. Complaints of serious human rights violations committed by representatives of national security institutions, including arbitrary arrest, illegal detention and torture are numerous. A welcome development was the issuance of an order by the Ministry of Interior on 30 November 2005, outlining expectations regarding police adherence to international human rights standards and the terms of reference for new human

rights offices to be established inside of provincial Afghan National Police headquarters.

30. The right to freedom of expression is protected in the Constitution and by law. However, article 31 of the Law on Mass Media, which allows for the prohibition of coverage of subjects contrary to principles of Islam in the mass media, continues to expose journalists to arbitrary decisions and punishment by the courts. For instance, a journalist was detained under this law for publishing an article critical of the punishment for adultery by women under Islamic law; he was eventually released through the appeal process.

31. Women in Afghanistan continue to face serious restrictions in the exercise of their rights, including obstacles to education, widespread discrimination, restrictions on movement and hence access to justice, and pervasive violence against women and girls. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission has established women's rights units across the country. Five shelters or safe houses were established for women in Kabul and the provinces. A small pilot Family Response Unit staffed by policewomen was created and officially inaugurated in 2006.

32. On 12 December, the Government adopted the National Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation and Justice, which is based on recommendations made by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. Following the adoption of the plan, which sets out a three-year comprehensive strategy on transitional justice, a three day conference on truth-seeking and reconciliation was hosted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) with support from UNAMA and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. The conference was attended by representatives of local government and civil society from throughout Afghanistan. Participants said the highest priority should be given to the need to end impunity, and to the prosecution and the removal of human rights abusers from public service and other positions of authority.

D. Reconstruction process

1. Development frameworks

33. The Government of Afghanistan has taken the lead in developing the frameworks that will guide the social and economic development processes essential for consolidating the gains of the Bonn process. It developed a report on the Millennium Development Goals, which was endorsed by the Cabinet in September 2005, adapted the global Millennium Development Goals to the Afghan context and included a ninth goal on enhancing security. The report provided the framework for the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy (I-ANDS) which was presented at the London Conference on Afghanistan. It describes the policies and programmes for meeting Afghanistan's development goals over the next five years and identifies four priority sources of growth in Afghanistan: (a) agriculture, pastoralism and rural industry; (b) productive use of State assets; (c) mining and other extractive industries; and (d) regional transit and trade.

34. The country programme action plans of UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as the protracted relief and recovery operation of the World Food Programme (WFP), were agreed upon with the Minister for Foreign Affairs in December 2005. Derived from

the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the 2006-2008 plans of these agencies are designed to help the Government and its partners achieve the Millennium Development Goals and the benchmarks of the Afghanistan Compact.

35. In full alignment with the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy, four United Nations joint programmes involving UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP, the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) are currently being implemented (on greening Afghanistan, healthy schools initiative, maternal mortality reduction and adult functional literacy).

2. Humanitarian developments

36. The capacity of Afghan institutions to manage humanitarian crises has improved, but remains highly dependent on external actors. In an effort to reduce this dependence, UNAMA, UNDP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) supported the establishment of the Government's National Emergency Operation Centre in December 2005. Liaison officers from UNAMA, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Coalition Forces have assisted the Centre in conducting scenario-based exercises to build the national disaster management capacity.

37. The Afghan winter has so far been relatively mild. WFP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and UNICEF distributed approximately 21,000 metric tons of food items and more than 10,000 family packs of non-food items to vulnerable populations throughout the country, and pre-positioned substantial contingency stocks. The Government, United Nations agencies and ISAF provided emergency relief to several hundred families in the north and northeast affected by avalanches and landslides in January and February. The Afghan and United Nations agencies joined efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the earthquake-affected regions in Kashmir/Pakistan. The Ministries of Defence and Health dispatched 5 helicopters, 1 AN-32 freight plane, 20 air personnel, 50 medical staff, 11 metric tons of medicine and 2.5 metric tons of food items. The Afghan Red Crescent Society contributed 380 tents, 10,000 blankets and 11.5 metric tons of food items. In cooperation with Afghan authorities, the United Nations agencies mobilized 47 trucks, 1,500 tents, and some 10,000 tarpaulins, jerry cans and blankets.

38. Under a UNICEF immunization programme some 2,317,000 children under five years of age were vaccinated against the poliomyelitis virus in the south, south-east and east of the country from 22 to 24 January 2006. From August 2005 to February 2006, UNHCR assisted some 34,280 refugees returning from the Islamic Republic of Iran and 235,600 from Pakistan.

III. Security

A. Security situation

Characterization of the overall situation

39. The security situation over the past six months was characterized by a clear consolidation of previously reported trends in extremist activity. The operational tempo and tactical sophistication of insurgent and other anti-Government elements have continued to develop. These activities pose an increasing threat to the local population, national security forces, international military forces and the international assistance effort. Violence and threats against local officials, religious leaders, teachers and staff and facilities of the education system have continued and intensified, in particular in the south and south-east of the country. Corruption, the menace of a criminalized economy, dominated by drug and other organized criminal networks, and the presence of illegally armed groups have continued to undermine the authority of the legitimately elected government.

40. Over the course of the reporting period, insurgents and other anti-Government elements increasingly employed more sophisticated and lethal tactics, such as the use of complex improvised explosive devices, well-planned ambushes and technically advanced multiple rocket attacks. Perhaps of greatest concern is the steep rise in the number of suicide bombings. Prior to 2005, there had been only five cases in the three preceding years. In 2005, there were 17. By 23 February 2006, the annual total for 2006 already stood at 11. This represents 65 per cent of the 2005 total in a two-month period. The lethality of these attacks has also grown. In 2006, the average number of victims per attack was 11, up from 5.4 in 2005.

41. Up to November 2005, a significant proportion of security related incidents involved clashes between anti-Government elements and security forces, primarily international military forces. Since most of those incidents resulted in the defeat of anti-Government elements, attacks against foreign military forces have been decreasing in favour of attacks against Afghan security forces and against soft targets (Government and social institutions), by entities that are difficult to detect or identify. This changing tactic is evident in four principal threat areas; namely: improvised explosive devices, suicide bombings, kidnapping and attacks against the education system.

42. Insurgents departed from the seasonal trend of past years by maintaining a high level of operational activity throughout the winter period. The first months of 2006 witnessed a rising level of insurgent attacks, in particular in the south and east of the country. Indeed, the number of anti-Government elements-related incidents has grown, unabated, since 2003. Of particular note is that the frequency of such attacks during the latter half of 2005 and the start of 2006 (200 per month) was higher than during any of the previous reporting periods, including the presidential elections of 2004. Over the past six months, the incidence of successful improvised explosive device attacks compared with the previous half year has increased by over 50 per cent. Anti-Government elements also appear to have expanded their theatre of operations into traditionally calmer areas of the west, north and north-east of the country. Activities include the use of improvised explosive devices (previously rare in these areas), as well as four suicide attacks or attempts in Mazari Sharif and

Balkh between October and January. In December, Hirat suffered its first recorded suicide attack.

43. Kidnapping is not a new trend in Afghanistan and numerous incidents of abductions of nationals for revenge or criminal reasons continue. Foreigners have also been targets in the past. The cases of the three United Nations election workers in 2004, the CARE aid worker in May 2005, the Indian road engineer (later killed) in November 2005 and the recent kidnapping of two Nepalese on 11 February (one released and one killed) are stark examples. Numerous reports received in January and February 2006 indicate criminal and anti-Government elements intent to kidnap foreigners for political leverage and/or ransom, primarily in Kabul and the eastern region of the country.

44. The reporting period was marred by methodical attempts to undermine the education system. Incidents included the burning or bombing of schools; the assassination of principals, teachers and officials and threats to students. These attacks have led to the closure of all schools in 6 districts and the closure of a substantive number of schools in 10 other districts of the southern region. In 2005, there were 99 such attacks, primarily in the southern region, south-eastern region and eastern region. Based on the 2006 rate of incidents, the annual projection extends to 144.

45. Publications in Europe depicting caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad sparked country-wide demonstrations in February, some of which turned violent, resulting in 6 persons dead and 14 injured. Clashes with provincial reconstruction teams in Meymana (Faryab) and Pul-i-Khumri (Baghlan) also broke out. United Nations staff in Meymana were temporarily relocated for more than two weeks, returning on 23 February. While demonstrations continue to be held on some provinces, they have been largely peaceful. Subsequent investigations suggested that the riot was not spontaneous and was a carefully planned and orchestrated event, explicitly targeting the provincial reconstruction team.

B. International Security Assistance Force

46. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led ISAF, continued to assist the Government of Afghanistan in maintaining security, and creating the conditions for stabilization and reconstruction, in Kabul, and the northern, north-eastern and western regions. On 8 December 2005, the NATO Foreign Ministers formally adopted a revised ISAF operational plan which provides for an expansion to the south.

47. NATO contributing nations have begun the process of gradually building up their troops in the south which will serve under the command of the Coalition Forces until the necessary capabilities are in place.

IV. Proposals for a continued United Nations presence in Afghanistan

48. The completion of the Bonn Agreement marked a significant achievement in Afghanistan's political transition. Nevertheless, as the present report highlights, the democratization and State-building achievements of the past four years remain fragile, and the underpinnings of a viable democratic State have yet to be firmly entrenched. The nascent democratic institutions created by the Bonn process cannot yet meet the basic needs of the population as a whole: curbing insecurity, controlling the narcotics industry, stimulating the economy, enforcing the law, providing basic services to and protecting the human rights of the Afghan population. Attendant progress is urgently needed across a number of interrelated areas, including the building of effective subnational administration, the strengthening of the justice system, and the establishment of favourable conditions for economic development. One of the best examples of the need for this comprehensive approach is security, where lasting progress is dependent not only on the building of stronger security agencies but also on good governance, justice and the rule of law, reinforced by reconstruction and development.

49. In recognition that Afghanistan would require international assistance to meet these challenges, in September 2005 the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations initiated a series of consultations with concerned international actors to reach a consensus on the strategy to address them. The process culminated in the launching, at the London Conference, of the Afghanistan Compact on 31 January 2006. The Conference was co-chaired by President Karzai, Prime Minister Tony Blair and myself.

50. Conference participants reaffirmed the unity of purpose demonstrated by Afghanistan and the international community during the Bonn talks and signaled their determination to continue to assist the Government in improving the lives of Afghans. Conference participants expressed their support for a programme of State building under Afghan leadership, in accordance with nationally set priorities, and recognized the need to make greater efforts to channel this assistance through the Government's budget. In effect the Afghanistan Compact is an ambitious five-year peacebuilding agenda in the areas of security, governance, rule of law and human rights, economic and social development and counter narcotics. The Compact identifies over 40 measurable and time-bound benchmarks in these areas and establishes a results-oriented action plan. In this regard, as a means towards achieving greater transparency and coordination of efforts, the Compact calls for the establishment of a Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, to be co-chaired by the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations. During the Conference, participating countries and organizations announced financial support of $10.5 billion to Afghanistan, over a five-year period. In its resolution 1659 (2006) of 15 February 2006, the Security Council endorsed the Afghanistan Compact and its annexes as providing the framework for the partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community.

A. Mandate

51. Over the past six months, planning for the new mandate of UNAMA has been the subject of extensive consultations between the Government of Afghanistan and the international partners of Afghanistan, both in the field and at Headquarters in New York. The plan provides for a continued political and good offices role for UNAMA in Afghanistan, including efforts to implement the Afghanistan Compact. UNAMA would also continue its humanitarian and development coordination activities. In this regard, all United Nations elements in Afghanistan would continue to be integrated into UNAMA. This would entail some changes in the size, scope and structure of UNAMA.

52. Subject to the concurrence of the Security Council, UNAMA would be entrusted with a mandate comprising the following elements:

(a) Providing political and strategic advice for the peace process, including strengthening the emerging democratic institutions of the State;

(b) Providing good offices, as appropriate;

(c) Assisting the Government of Afghanistan in the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, and co-chairing the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board;

(d) Continuing to promote human rights through an independent role in monitoring human rights violations and capacity-building of national institutions, in close collaboration with OHCHR;

(e) Continuing to provide technical assistance in sectors where the United Nations has a demonstrated comparative advantage and expertise in Afghanistan, including in the disbandment of illegal armed groups and support to the Independent Electoral Commission;

(f) Continuing to manage all United Nations humanitarian relief, recovery, reconstruction and development activities in Afghanistan, under the overall authority of my Special Representative and in coordination with the Government of Afghanistan.

B. Structure of UNAMA

53. The Mission, headed by my Special Representative, would retain the current structure with a few modifications to scope and size, depending on security conditions. The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General would continue to be supported by two pillars, each headed by a Deputy Special Representative.

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General

54. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who also serves as the Designated Official for the safety and security of United Nations personnel in Afghanistan, would be directly supported in his functions by an office comprising a Chief of Staff, special assistants, an Office of Communications and Public Information headed by a spokesperson, as well as a Field Support Coordination Unit that would continue to serve as the primary interface for all regional offices. The

Office would also include a Legal Unit; a Language Unit; and officers dedicated to best practices functions, information and database management, and reporting.

55. Moreover, the Office of the Special Representative would include a small unit to provide, in cooperation with its Afghan counterparts, secretariat services to the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, as envisaged in the Afghanistan Compact. In this role, UNAMA would seek (a) to promote the visibility of the Government of Afghanistan over international assistance activities, and (b) to promote greater coherence of the overall reconstruction effort.

56. UNAMA would implement its coordination and monitoring role while recognizing that implementation of many elements of the Compact would depend on other actors with significant capacities. The implementation of the Compact and the expected results would be a shared responsibility of all national and international actors, including donors and other Government and non-governmental organizations.

Pillar I: political affairs

57. Pillar I (political affairs) would consist of the following sections and units: political affairs; human rights; rule of law; police advisory unit; corrections; and military advisory unit. A joint mission analysis cell would be established to provide the Mission leadership with in-depth assessments and policy advice on the entire range of strategic issues facing the Mission in the implementation of its mandate. The new cell, using mostly existing staff resources, would be established to harmonize and analyse information from a wide range of political, security, humanitarian and development sources.

58. Under the direction of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General — Political, the tasks of the pillar would be as follows:

(a) To monitor, analyse and report on political, security and military developments within the country and the region;

(b) To maintain contact with Afghan leaders, political entities, civil society groups, institutions and representatives of the central and provincial authorities; and to maintain contact with representatives of the international community;

(c) To provide, on behalf of the Special Representative, political and strategic advice to national and international authorities at the national and local level;

(d) To perform good offices as necessary on behalf of the Special Representative and in support of the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in general;

(e) To independently monitor human rights violations, and carry out systematic human rights verification with the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission; to promote and provide education on human rights; to track the effectiveness of the Government's initiatives to institutionalize human rights; and to ensure that a rights-based approach is applied in all aspects of the Mission's work;

(f) To provide technical assistance and support to national and international actors on the disbandment of illegal armed groups, future electoral processes and human rights, including initiatives related to transitional justice;

(g) To provide information and guidance on political issues and matters related to security, the rule of law (including police, corrections and justice) and human rights, in support of the Mission's responsibilities for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact, and for the benefit of other UNAMA activities.

Pillar II: relief, recovery and development

59. Pillar II (relief, recovery and development) would consist of the following units: institution-building, governance and development, resident and humanitarian coordinator unit; gender; counter-narcotics; and programme funds unit. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General — Relief, Recovery and Development would continue to serve as Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator, as well as deputy Designated Official for the safety of United Nations personnel in Afghanistan. Under the direction of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General — Relief, Recovery and Development, the tasks of pillar II would be as follows:

(a) To provide information and guidance on relief, recovery and development issues and matters related to governance, economic and social development, counter-narcotics and gender in support of the Mission's responsibilities for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact;

(b) To promote capacity-building to key strategic ministries involved in the implementation of the Compact and to ensure that other United Nations activities also support capacity-building in Afghan institutions;

(c) To provide strategic direction and coordination to the activities of the United Nations country team in general, and with specific reference to the implementation of the Compact;

(d) To plan and coordinate United Nations development activities and ensure donor coordination in the areas of recovery and development, and maintain links with the government, donors and other development partners and both national and sub-national level;

(e) To plan and coordinate United Nations humanitarian operations and maintain links with the Government, donors and the broader humanitarian community for this purpose.

60. The functions outlined above for both pillars would require some increase in international and national officers at UNAMA headquarters. At the regional and provincial level, these functions would be implemented by UNAMA regional offices, including subregional offices operating under their direction, as described below. While the regional offices would operate under the overall direction of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, secondary reporting lines to the Deputy Special Representatives would be maintained in relation to all activities identified above.

Regional offices

61. To support the Government of Afghanistan and its international partners in improving the delivery of services to Afghan citizens throughout the country,

UNAMA would maintain its current presence of eight regional offices and two subregional offices, and extend the reach of the regional offices, security circumstances permitting, by establishing an additional presence in other provincial capitals, according to their strategic importance. The regional offices would maintain their integrated structure, comprising both pillar I and II functions, to ensure that the core tasks of each pillar identified above would, at the local level, be carried out. In addition, the regional offices, supported by the subregional offices, would seek to support efforts at the central level to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Compact. Furthermore, the small liaison offices in Islamabad and Tehran would be retained and would report directly to my Special Representative through the Deputy Special Representative for pillar I (political).

Mission support

62. Mission support would continue based on a traditional United Nations support structure to provide critical administrative and logistical assistance to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the two pillars, and all regional offices. New subregional offices, if established, would use facilities already established by UNOPS in the course of the parliamentary elections, and would be shared with other interested United Nations agencies on a cost-sharing basis. In general, the Mission's approach, implemented over the past four years, to seek common services arrangements and economies of scale with other United Nations entities wherever possible, would continue. The Mission would increase its efforts to rely on national staff to ensure a long-term approach to building the capacity of Afghan human capital. An expansion of the Mission's geographic coverage would require the deployment of additional administrative and technical staff to provide on-site support, in particular with respect to transportation, perimeter security and communications and information technology. The current level of insecurity would, however, necessitate additional risk mitigation measures to be put in place to enable UNAMA to continue at its current operating level. It also presents an urgent requirement for air asset support to provide access and evacuation capability to existing and possible new offices. To mitigate the difficult field conditions under which staff in Afghanistan serve, and to ensure a motivated and stable workforce, the Mission would continue to address staff training and welfare issues. Conduct and discipline mechanisms would also be strengthened by dedicated resources.

V. Observations

63. The past four years have witnessed a remarkable transformation in Afghanistan's political landscape. The completion of the Bonn process, which culminated in December 2005 in the inauguration of a representative and fully elected National Assembly, vividly underscores the milestones that have been reached in establishing the underpinnings of a viable democratic State. First and foremost, it underscores the determination of the Afghan people to realize their long-awaited aspirations for peace and stability in their nation. It is also a reflection of the steadfast partnership between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community. Nevertheless, the foundations of the State remain weak and as yet do not have the capacity to deliver to the majority of Afghans the basic services they require to improve their daily lot.

64. Afghanistan continues to face enormous challenges in the areas of security, governance, rule of law and human rights, sustainable economic and social development and combating the illegal narcotics industry. If the State is to gain credibility and enjoy the support of the population, it is imperative that meaningful progress in each of these areas be achieved. The Government must lead this process; however, it cannot accomplish this alone. Afghanistan will continue to need considerable political and financial engagement by the international community for some time to come. The commitments entered into by the Government of Afghanistan and the international community in launching the Afghanistan Compact at the London Conference provide a reassuring signal and a clearly articulated common vision of Afghanistan's future. Indeed, without this sustained support, the danger of a relapse into the dynamics that plunged Afghanistan into years of war, and the reemergence of the consequences of the years of neglect, would be genuine.

65. Security remains foremost among the challenges facing Afghanistan. I am increasingly concerned that the insecurity that is poisoning the lives of Afghans in several provinces of the country and that denies them the ability to enjoy the benefits of the peace process, is whittling away at the support for the institutions that have emerged under the Bonn process. Regardless of the causes of the conflict in Afghanistan — continuing insurgency and terrorism, factional violence and disputes over resources that State institutions are still too weak to address and a thriving drug economy that provides fertile ground for criminal networks and corruption — the concept of a democratic State will only take root if the people of Afghanistan become convinced that what is on offer is better than any alternative, either experienced or being imposed by force. A credible national Government that can deliver on promises to effectively reconstruct the country is essential if meaningful progress can be made in other critical areas, including the exercise of democratic freedom and the rights of women.

66. The fertile ground for anti-Government violence and terrorism is not limited to the unmet needs of ordinary Afghan citizens. Looking back at the trends of violence over the past six months, including attacks against civilians and the use of suicide bombings, I must stress once again that the sources of support for the insurgency and for anti-Government terrorist operations need to be tackled. Afghanistan can only become a place of stability to itself and its neighbours if the causes of violence and distrust, including all its domestic and external dimensions, are resolutely addressed.

67. The other necessary conditions for improving security include progress in the disarmament of illegal armed groups and the development of credible and sustainable national security institutions. The successful implementation of the disarmament of illegal armed groups will require a perception by the illegal armed groups that the Government enjoys the full support of the international civilian and military forces in carrying out the programme. Even as the Afghan National Army continues to expand, the Government of Afghanistan will continue to rely on the assistance of international security forces in promoting security and stability in all regions of Afghanistan. The Afghan National Police will require international support for reform and training in the full range of police skills, ranging from criminal investigations and forensic analysis, to human rights and gender issues. Such training, however, needs to be conducted under a comprehensive national programme with uniform standards and in the context of overall security sector reform. While the fiscal sustainability of the Afghan National Police remains a

concern, there is an immediate need to replenish the international trust fund for the payment of police salaries, which faces an alarming deficit. I call upon Member States to do their utmost to continue their support for this pillar of national security.

68. The planned expansion of NATO/ISAF is an encouraging development. I encourage NATO contributing nations to dispatch appropriate military forces with common and robust rules of engagement, enhanced command and control arrangements with the Coalition Forces, as well as common objectives for the provincial reconstruction teams.

69. The implementation of the Afghanistan Compact will put the country and its international partners to many tests. In addition to the challenge of security, it will remain vital to ensure that development occurs at a pace and in a manner that meets the aspirations and harnesses the potential of the Afghan people. The Compact itself, together with the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy, provides an unprecedented opportunity to ensure that the Government of Afghanistan and the international community work together on a common plan towards shared objectives in the fields of security, governance and development. If it is to succeed, the Afghan-led process will require the redoubling of the international community's efforts; the timely fulfilment of the commitments made in London, including the deployment of necessary security assets. It will also require sustained attention to strengthening ties between Afghanistan and its neighbours. I call upon the Government of Afghanistan to do its utmost to meet the benchmarks set out in these documents and I call upon the participants in the London Conference to show continuing generosity and commitment in making available the resources necessary to realize this vision.

70. A measure of success in meeting Afghanistan's challenges will also depend on the extent to which respect for human rights is institutionalized. We must continue to support the Government and civil society in taking the necessary steps to close the gap between the rhetoric and the reality of human rights protection. Human rights indicators, including those set out in the Compact, should serve as a measure of progress in the overall development process. Of particular importance will be the steps taken to implement the National Action Plan on Peace, Reconciliation and Justice, and the vetting of senior Government posts.

71. UNAMA has completed its tasks with respect to the Bonn Agreement, but its role does not end here. Its current mandate under Security Council resolution 1589 (2005) expires on 24 March 2006, and I recommend that the mandate of UNAMA as outlined above be extended for a further period of 12 months. The Mission's primary responsibilities will be the continued provision of political and strategic guidance to the Afghan leadership and its international partners, including security forces, as they embark on the ambitious and vital next phase of State building. UNAMA will also, through its role as co-chair of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board, help the Government of Afghanistan gain visibility over international assistance activities, and advocate for greater coherence in the overall reconstruction efforts in support of the implementation of the Afghanistan Compact. Success in this endeavour will also depend on the mutually reinforcing role and full cooperation of all stakeholders.

72. In order to carry out its responsibilities, and to justify the confidence placed in the United Nations, UNAMA must continue and, as circumstances permit, expand its outreach to the Afghan population. Nevertheless, having taken stock of the

current security trends, I am increasingly concerned over the threat posed to the safety and security of United Nations staff. I must therefore emphasize that the implementation of the UNAMA mandate will be contingent upon the provision of additional and sufficient security resources, including assured air and medical evacuation support.

73. In conclusion, I would wish to pay a special tribute to Jean Arnault, my former Special Representative, for his leadership and commitment, and to all the men and women of UNAMA and its partner organizations for their outstanding efforts on behalf of Afghanistan. I trust that the same level of support will be extended to Tom Koenigs, who recently assumed his responsibilities as my Special Representative. In the months since my previous report was issued, international personnel in Afghanistan have increasingly come under attack. Their courage and forbearance under these conditions are commendable.